

### **135.24 Volunteer health care provider program established immunity from civil liability.**

1. The director shall establish within the department a program to provide to eligible hospitals, clinics, free clinics, or other health care facilities, health care referral programs, or charitable organizations, free medical, dental, chiropractic, pharmaceutical, nursing, optometric, psychological, social work, behavioral science, podiatric, physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, and emergency medical care services given on a voluntary basis by health care providers. A participating health care provider shall register with the department and obtain from the department a list of eligible, participating hospitals, clinics, free clinics, or other health care facilities, health care referral programs, or charitable organizations.

2. The department, in consultation with the department of human services, shall adopt rules to implement the volunteer health care provider program which shall include the following:

*a.* Procedures for registration of health care providers deemed qualified by the board of medical examiners, the board of physician assistant examiners, the board of dental examiners, the board of nursing, the board of chiropractic examiners, the board of psychology examiners, the board of social work examiners, the board of behavioral science examiners, the board of pharmacy examiners, the board of optometry examiners, the board of podiatry examiners, the board of physical and occupational therapy examiners, the state board for respiratory care, and the Iowa department of public health, as applicable.

*b.* Procedures for registration of free clinics.

*c.* Criteria for and identification of hospitals, clinics, free clinics, or other health care facilities, health care referral programs, or charitable organizations, eligible to participate in the provision of free medical, dental, chiropractic, pharmaceutical, nursing, optometric, psychological, social work, behavioral science, podiatric, physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, or emergency medical care services through the volunteer health care provider program. A free clinic, a health care facility, a health care referral program, a charitable organization, or a health care provider participating in the program shall not bill or charge a patient for any health care provider service provided under the volunteer health care provider program.

*d.* Identification of the services to be provided under the program. The services provided may include, but shall not be limited to, obstetrical and gynecological medical services, psychiatric services provided by a physician licensed under chapter 148, 150, or 150A, dental services provided under chapter 153, or other services provided under chapter 147A, 148A, 148B, 148C, 149, 151, 152, 152B, 152E, 154, 154B, 154C, 154D, or 155A.

3. A health care provider providing free care under this section shall be considered an employee of the state under chapter 669 and shall be afforded protection as an employee of the state under section 669.21, provided that the health care provider has done all of the following:

*a.* Registered with the department pursuant to subsection 1.

*b.* Provided medical, dental, chiropractic, pharmaceutical, nursing, optometric, psychological, social work, behavioral science, podiatric, physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, or emergency medical care services through a hospital, clinic, free clinic, or other health care facility, health care referral program, or charitable organization listed as eligible and participating by the department pursuant to subsection 1.

4. A free clinic providing free care under this section shall be considered a state agency solely for the purposes of this section and chapter 669 and shall be afforded protection under chapter 669 as a state agency for all claims arising from the provision of free care by a health care provider registered under subsection 3

who is providing services at the free clinic in accordance with this section or from the provision of free care by a health care provider who is covered by adequate medical malpractice insurance as determined by the department, if the free clinic has registered with the department pursuant to subsection 1.

5. For the purposes of this section:

*a. "Charitable organization"* means a charitable organization within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code which has as its primary purpose the sponsorship or support of programs designed to improve the quality, awareness, and availability of chiropractic, dental, medical, pharmaceutical, nursing, optometric, psychological, social work, behavioral science, podiatric, physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, or emergency medical care services to children and to serve as a funding mechanism for provision of chiropractic, dental, medical, pharmaceutical, nursing, optometric, psychological, social work, behavioral science, podiatric, physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, or emergency medical care services, including but not limited to immunizations, to children in this state.

*b. "Free clinic"* means a facility, other than a hospital or health care provider's office which is exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which has as its sole purpose the provision of health care services without charge to individuals who are otherwise unable to pay for the services.

*c. "Health care provider"* means a physician licensed under chapter 148, 150, or 150A, a chiropractor licensed under chapter 151, a physical therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 148A, an occupational therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 148B, a podiatrist licensed pursuant to chapter 149, a physician assistant licensed and practicing under a supervising physician pursuant to chapter 148C, a licensed practical nurse, a registered nurse, or an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed pursuant to chapter 152 or 152E, a respiratory therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 152B, a dentist, dental hygienist, or dental assistant registered or licensed to practice under chapter 153, an optometrist licensed pursuant to chapter 154, a psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 154B, a social worker licensed pursuant to chapter 154C, a mental health counselor or a marital and family therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 154D, a pharmacist licensed pursuant to chapter 155A, or an emergency medical care provider certified pursuant to chapter 147A.

93 Acts, ch 65, § 1; 95 Acts, ch 121, § 1; 98 Acts, ch 1027, §16; 2001 Acts, ch 176, §31; 2002 Acts, ch 1108, §8; 2003 Acts, ch 89, §1; 2005 Acts, ch 118, §16